



REPRESENTING COUNTIES ALONG THE ROUTE OF THE SAN JOAQUINS

*Alameda, Contra Costa, Fresno, Kern, Kings, Los Angeles, Madera
Merced, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tulare*

MEETING MINUTES

April 29, 2010
Fresno, California

Lunch was provided by Fresno County Board of Supervisors Office (Patricia Pinedo) prior to the meeting.

Call to Order

Amtrak arranged to have a special Amtrak bus to accommodate attendees of the *San Joaquin* Valley Rail Committee (SJVRC) who were traveling from the south. There were stops at both the Bakersfield and Hanford Stations.

Chair John Pedrozo called this meeting of the SJVRC to order at 12:20 p.m. at the Hugh Burns State Building in Fresno County.

Patricia Pinedo, Chief of Staff for Supervisor Henry Perea, conducted the welcome to Fresno County.

Introductions

Contra Costa County Member, Howard Abelson announced the events the Bay Area Electric Railroad Association, which operates the Western Railway Museum in Fairfield, is planning. The Bay Area Electric Railroad Association started in 1947 to save and preserve the electric street cars. After finding out that the electric street cars were going to be abandoned and turned to scrap, this organization was able to buy the cars and preserve them. On the weekend of June 4 - 6, 2010, there will be a 50th Anniversary Weekend Extravaganza. At this event, Arthur Lloyd will be honored. Mr. Lloyd is the only surviving member from the original founders of the Bay Area Electric Railroad Association.

Brad Aborn, Mariposa County Supervisor, talked about the dedication of the Mariposa County Park and Ride to Ken Johnson. Mr. Aborn also thanked everyone for their support of this dedication.

Lee Goldenberg of the California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) Division of Rail, introduced Brian Tsukamoto, the new *San Joaquin* Corridor Liaison for the Division.

Public Comments

The SJVRC did not receive any public comments on non-agenda items.

Bill Kirby from Rail Passenger Association of California (Rail PAC) discussed a meeting in Los Angeles, which brought rail advocates together to discuss the development of a joint proposal for shared information between high speed rail and conventional rail lines. Mr. Kirby also discussed the connectivity of the rail lines over the Tehachapi Mountains just south of Bakersfield, known as the “Bakersfield Gap.” Rail PAC supports the connection of the Bakersfield Gap. Arthur Lloyd, San Mateo County Transit District, agreed. Stanislaus County member and former vice-chair, George Gaekle added that the closure of the “Bakersfield Gap” was one of the original goals for the SJVRC. Mr. Lloyd concluded that we should refocus on this goal and try to get one passenger train scheduled through the Bakersfield Gap.

Action Items

A. Minutes of the February 11, 2010, Quarterly meeting in Atwater

PASSED: Merced County Member John Pedrozo made a motion and members unanimously approved this action item.

B. Vote for Chair and Vice-Chair positions

Merced County Member John Pedrozo was nominated to remain Chair for the next two years (April 2010- April 2012) during the last meeting. All members approved the vote (with Chair Pedrozo abstaining)

Supervisor Vito Chiesa was nominated for vice-chair during the last meeting. Madera County Member Vern Moss made a motion for the vote for Stanislaus County Member Chiesa to be voted in as vice-chair. *San Joaquin* County Member, Stacy Mortenson, seconded and all members approved the votes (Vice-Chair Chiesa was not present).

C. Vote for the *San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee* new logo

The committee marked their votes on the ballot form in the packet and they were tallied at this meeting. The committee voted on the bottom logo listed on the ballot; however, Butte County District Attorney, Michael Snyder commented that he would like to see the direction of the train on the logo be changed in the reverse direction. The members agreed and Caltrans Division of Rail-Marketing Lisa Martin, offered to make that change.

Committee Member Information Items

Fresno County Member Larry Miller wanted to acknowledge and eulogize Mariposa County resident Ken Gosting, since he recently passed away. Mr. Gosting was an active participant and involved at the many SJVRC meetings.

Guest Speakers

New Car Specifications

Chris Cypret

Chris Cypret, retired Caltrans Division of Rail employee, discussed the new car specifications. Tulare County Member Ty Holscher, was concerned if these changes would add any length to the car. Ms. Cypret confirmed that the car length will remain the same.

The luggage storage area will remain in the same space, but overhead bins will be added to accommodate more luggage room.

Caltrans Division of Rail Chief, Bill Bronte also commented that these changes were very small, but these amenities are based on customer suggestions and will add to the comfort of the Amtrak train travel experience for the passengers.

Ms. Cypret directed the committee to the website which includes the information she gave to the committee and the participants of this meeting. She asked the committee to please review it and send in their comments.

Mr. Michael Barnbaum, resident of Sacramento County, discussed dilemma of mandatory reservations on the *San Joaquin* trains and non-reservation “monthly pass” passengers on the Capital Corridor and the Surfliner when they board *San Joaquin* trains. The concern was passenger capacity on the *San Joaquin* train. Mr. Barnbaum wanted to know if anything can change. Mr. Ableson reminded the committee that this was an issue that was brought up several years ago and they committee spent a lot of time and energy on this topic. The committee didn’t see any reason to revisit this item at this time.

Mariposa County Supervisor Brad Aborn commented that there are many feeders to the *San Joaquin* Valley Rail System into Yosemite National Park. The County owns the first bus and it is the one traveling to Yosemite Valley and is equipped with large picture windows for full view of the travel area for passenger enjoyment.

Alameda County Representative Mr. Tom Blalock suggested that funds from the many partially funded projects be moved to another account so Caltrans could complete at least one project from the totality of the funds.

Mr. Bronte discussed some of the issues with combining different funding sources and a nationwide effort to standardize the passenger rail car design and equipment. Mr. Bronte presented that Amtrak/Caltrans are part of a nationwide effort for railcar improvement under the Passenger Rail Improvement Act 2008 standard, with provision section 305, wanted to develop a standardized specification for a corridor rail car. They wanted cars that all states will participate in, that will develop one type of car instead of many different cars that are also economical. In addition, this will regenerate the rail car manufacturing industry for the US on a national basis. Mr. Bronte discussed that there are no railroad car manufacturers in the US there are only railroad car assemblers in the US. For example, if something on the rail car needs to be replaced, we will be able to replace it by contacting another state or rail line because we will be using the same type of equipment and should have the part we need. This will also reduce our own in-house inventory, which will require storage. In order for Caltrans/Amtrak to obtain Federal funds, in the future, we have to be a part of this nationwide passenger rail car standard. All of the states will need to participate.

The funding is on a two prong level, consisting of the in-state contribution (up to \$125 million) bond funds and the federal funds. Other states are part of the Section 305 committee, as well as, the passenger rail car industry. The California specification will be

the basis for what will become the national specification for bi-level passenger rail equipment. The passenger rail cars will be tested up to 135 mph for potential to travel up to 125 mph with Positive Train Control (PTC).

In 1995, the original “California Car” was tested at a speed of 135 mph.

Mr. Bronte also discussed that Amtrak and Caltrans are going through the process of modifying the existing fleet to be compatible with the equipment of the next generation. He also discussed the Comet Cars specifications.

Reports: To the extent possible, hard copies of these reports, being presented, will be distributed to the committee members before, during or after the meeting.

A. Amtrak California Safety/Security/Train Operations Mike Edwards

Power point presentation- Mr. Edwards, Amtrak Trainmaster for On-Board Services, discussed results of the first quarter of the *San Joaquin* train service and schedule. Mr. Edwards started with the *San Joaquin* On-Time Performance passenger ridership per train number and times. Mr. Edwards presented the graphed results of this study showed that the Amtrak passenger train schedule may cause our own delays. Other reasons for delays vary. Passenger Train Interferences (PTI) are considered incidents that are not in the schedule or plan.

Maintenance of Way (MOW)-

Severe weather and water saturation on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF) rail tracks are one of the primary reasons for schedule delays. These delays are for repairs and maintenance to the rail tracks. Other findings presented were the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) has fewer freight trains on the tracks (due to the economy) and are not an issue at this time. Performance of the *San Joaquin* train schedule was very favorable.

Trespassers and Debris Strikes-

There are still problems with shopping carts on tracks. It isn't the strike on the front of the train, but in between the cars. The problem is not the car itself hitting the object but in between the cars. This is an area of the train that is the most vulnerable. This area houses the air hoses, brakes lines and other sensitive vulnerable components. There are still problems at certain areas with Amtrak train strikes due to shopping carts on the BNSF Right of Way. Mr. Edwards discussed the multiple-minute delay for each incident. He also mentioned the Operation Lifesaver as a positive outreach. Some of the delays from trespassers or debris have ranged from 8-120 minutes. Amtrak is very efficient with handling these emergencies. Unfortunately they have many opportunities to refine a system for such events. They are able to get passengers and trains on their way fairly quickly.

Merced County member, Angelo Lamas asked if the local police department was notified and be involved to help with this problem. Capt. James Martino, Amtrak Police Department, will discuss this issue with local departments in *San Joaquin* County. Capt. Martino discussed security measures at the Jack London/Sacramento/Bakersfield/Fresno stations and the coordination with local police department to eliminate criminal activity and increase safety. He discussed that in the Fresno county area where there were many Amtrak train strikes due to shopping carts, with assistance from the local police department they found out

that students from the nearby local school were placing the carts in the right of way before and after school hours. After Amtrak, and local police, representatives visited and presented the problem to the school administration and students, the amount of strikes reduced. Capt. Martino also discussed the threat assessment drill of the Fresno station and had very favorable results.

B. BNSF Railway Company- No report

C. Union Pacific Railroad Company (UPRR)

Wes Lujan

Mr. Lujan, UPRR Marketing Representative, stated that UPRR maintenance has been mowing the right of way for fire safety and prevention. The grass and weeds are now reduced. They are working very aggressively to keep this area clean. UPRR continues to replace ties and rails. UPRR has agreed to PTC in the Los Angeles area. Mr. Lujan also informed the committee that he is currently working on the High Speed Rail Project from the Central Valley to the Bay Area.

D. Amtrak California Bus Operations

Barbara Ruditis

Ms. Ruditis, Amtrak Bus Operations Manager-South, discussed and distributed hard copies of the bus schedule changes. She also discussed some of the proposed changes for the interior bus design, which will include more seat spacing (14”), tables with chairs that face each other, wi-fi and 110 outlets. These will be added to the thru-way buses. Barbara discussed Amtrak National Employee Appreciation Day which will take place on April 30, 2010.

E. San Joaquin Passenger Services

David Nisley

Fresno County Committee Member Mr. Larry Miller asked if the food vendor contract voids Amtrak from allowing local food vendor's, such as Dole or Sunkist, which have package items to be incorporate into the “Kids on Trains” program meals. He suggested the local vendors give out these free items to the kids on the trains in these meals for promotion of the programs, and for the local food companies as well. Mr. Nisley stated if we are not selling it, then it would be okay and he would not be opposed to this. Mr. Nisley stated that there are still offering 136 items on the menu.

F. Amtrak California Marketing

Lisa Martin/Tom Sponsler

Mr. Tom Sponsler, Amtrak Field Marketing, discussed National Train Day. Any interested members can gain more information and a list of events online at NationalTrainDay.com. The celebrations took place in Sacramento, Fresno, LA and other sites all across the nation. Events were listed on the online website at NationalTrainDay.Com.

Lisa Martin, Division of Rail-Marketing, mentioned that that there will be an event at the Sacramento Railroad museum. In addition to the National Train Day, there is a creative campaign which includes an artist completing three-dimensional sidewalk chalk art at six different locations through the month of May. This chalk is train themed in celebration and promotion of the Amtrak Rail Service. For more information and locations, check online at AmtrakCalifornia.com.

Ms. Martin also discussed the Paid Vacation Sweepstakes. No Amtrak or Caltrans employees are eligible. For more information, check online at catravelmadesimple.com. This event ends on May 23, 2010.

Ms. Martin also mentioned the “Virtual Open House” for the new rail car equipment design can be visited at Amtrak.com. The site allows for comments and views of the design for the changes Ms. Cypret discussed earlier in this meeting.

Ms. Martin announced the new website for Amtrak.com will be out within the next couple of months and is designed to be user friendly.

G. Amtrak Government Affairs/Federal Updates

Jonathan Hutchison

No report at this time.

H. California Department of Transportation/State Updates Bill Bronte

Mr. Goldenberg stated that ridership for *San Joaquin* Corridor was up and has been increasing over twenty-five percent the last four years, record ridership for the *San Joaquin* Corridor. Ridership is up and the trains are almost full most of the time, this also includes the midweek trains. One of the solutions is to add more equipment to the train set, making some of the *San Joaquin* a five-car train set. This will increase both passenger seats and ridership by twenty-five percent. Mr. Goldenberg stated that the dispatchers and other personnel are doing a better job helping on-time performance. Mr. Goldenberg also acknowledged the partners UPRR, BNSF and Amtrak for keeping the trains on schedule, and the customer service level high.

Mr. Bronte stated that it is unknown how state funding, for rail projects and operations, will be for the coming years. That there will be one more year of the rail operations as it stands today since there is a hold. However, this may change since the tax revenues are lower than anticipated. This may cut into the rail program and operations, which may see a 5% cut in services. We don't know where they will be at this time.

There are very few new projects moving forward from the Proposition 1A program funds. The bond funding allocated \$400 million for inner-city rail. These funds are filling the cash flow needs for existing projects.

Proposition 1B, Homeland Security Grant, was designed to benefit inner-city rail lines. The dollar amount of these funds is based on a formula which takes into account track and train miles. The two biggest recipients of rail operators of this funding source are Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and Metrolink.

There is \$ 47.5 million dollars allocated for PTC between Moorpark and Oceanside. Another \$24 million for the positive train control between Oceanside to San Diego.

Mr. Bronte addressed the federal funding source outlook. There is federal seed money to match other funds with federal funds, dollar for dollar. These grants are current being prepared and submitted by the Division of Rail at this time.

National Rail Plan planning grant (\$20 million) will be developed to integrate multimodal which will include airports, commuters lines, highways and trains (both freight and commuters). The Federal Rail Administration (FRA) is currently working on this grant, and there will be a State Rail Plan as well. The State Rail Plan must be consistent with the National Rail Plan. The National Rail Plan will involve input from many stakeholders from each of the states.

Mr. Bronte also discussed the “Domestic Content Rule” for buying new equipment. If the equipment contains 60% of it’s components from the US, then it is under the “Buy America” domestic rule and considered 100%. Now it is changing and FRA is saying it is now unacceptable.

Mr. Bronte stated that other states are interested in the California Cars specifications. So the fleet starts from 36 in the California region to hundreds of cars nationwide. We must have the specifications in September 2011.

Member Comments and Suggestions for Future Agenda Items

Chair Pedrozo thanked the committee for the continued support for the next two years as Chairperson and on behalf of Co-chairperson Chiesa. He also thanked Fresno County for hosting and providing the lunch for the SJVRC meeting.

Stanislaus County member and former vice-chair George Gaekle expressed his concern with the partnership between the High Speed Rail and other conventional rail lines. He requested that there will be sub-committee be set up between High Speed rail and the SJVRC. He requested that the High Speed Rail be an agenda item so the ideas discussed will can follow through and produce a plan.

Mr. Goldenberg wanted to update the committee on the environmental study for the *San Joaquin* Corridor and the concerns for the access into the Los Angeles Basin known as the “Bakersfield Gap.”

Mr. Goldenberg also discussed the relocation of the Madera station in the fall and proposed that the October SJVRC meeting will be held at this new location site. Madera County Supervisor Vern Moss stated that a schedule has been published that outlines that construction of the station site.

Mr. Goldenberg commented that the special Amtrak bus that was incorporated for this meeting was very unusual and may be used for future meetings to tighten up the meeting schedule. Mr. Goldenberg asked the committee members to consider this for future meetings.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 p. m.

The next meeting will be held at Castle Conference Center, Atwater, CA in Merced County on July 29, 2010.

Attachments

1. Attendance
2. Sign-in records (four pages)
3. Handouts

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY RAIL COMMITTEE

ROLL CALL for April 29, 2010 (FRESNO)

<u>MEMBER NAME</u>	<u>REPRESENTING</u>	<u>HERE</u>
TOM BLALOCK- BART President	ALAMEDA	✓
MICHAEL SNYDER	ALAMEDA	✓
FEDERAL GLOVER-Supervisor	CONTRA COSTA	
HOWARD ABELSON	CONTRA COSTA	✓
MARY PIEPHO (alt)- Supervisor	CONTRA COSTA	
JUDY CASE- Supervisor	FRESNO	
LYNN GORMAN (alt)	FRESNO	
HENRY PEREA(alt) - Supervisor/PATRICIA PINEDO Attended	FRESNO	✓
LARRY MILLER	FRESNO	✓
HARVEY L. HALL (Mayor -City of Bakersfield)	KERN	✓
MICHAEL J. RUBIO- Supervisor	KERN	
BOB SNODDY (alt)	KERN	
DON MABEN (alt) - Supervisor	KERN	✓
RICHARD VALLE- Supervisor	KINGS	
TONY BARBA (alt) - Supervisor	KINGS	
{VACANT}	KINGS	
HANK FUNG (alt for Supervisor Mike Antonovich)	LOS ANGELES	✓
BRUCE HEARD	LOS ANGELES	
VERN MOSS- Supervisor	MADERA	✓
RICHARD POYTHRESS	MADERA	✓
MAX RODRIGUEZ (alt) - Supervisor	MADERA	
BRAD ABORN - Supervisor	MARIPOSA	✓
MARVIN WELLS	MARIPOSA	✓
JOHN PEDROZO - Supervisor (Chair)	MERCED	✓
ANGELO LAMAS	MERCED	✓
HUBERT (“HUB”) WALSH - Supervisor (alt)	MERCED	
DARRYL CLARE (Council Member -City of Galt)	SACRAMENTO	
ED COVIELLO - Michael Barnbaum attended	SACRAMENTO	✓
LEROY ORNELLAS- Supervisor	SAN JOAQUIN	
KEN VOGEL (alt) - Supervisor	SAN JOAQUIN	
STACEY MORTENSEN	SAN JOAQUIN	✓
BRIAN SCHMIDT (alt)	SAN JOAQUIN	
VITO CHIESA - Supervisor (Vice –Chair)	STANISLAUS	
GEORGE GAEKLE	STANISLAUS	✓
MIKE ENNIS- Supervisor	TULARE	
TY HOLSCHER	TULARE	✓

Total voting members:

18

ARTHUR L. LLOYD	(FACILITATOR)	✓
-----------------	---------------	---